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kindly by me, and I may as well speak him fair; so then let's make a beginning."

These cogitations led the count insensibly to a state in which he could discuss the worthy goldsmith's proposition with something like temper—a process which, to speak the truth, was much accelerated by the click of bolts and the closing of drawers, as the banker stowed away his papers and moneys into various places of security.

"By mine honour, Messer Molo," the count began, "thou fliest at high quarry. 'Tis bold falconry and perilous, I warn thee. Dost thou forget that a patrician may not marry one who is a mere citizen, unless the grand council shall give their sanction—a thing not easily obtained, even should I be disposed to take thee at thy word."

"Content you, my lord, on that head; I should not require the hand of the fair lady for my nephew other than with the permission of the republic. If I fail in obtaining that, the forfeiture shall be mine. You shall be absolved from the condition, and yet keep the money."

"In that thou speakest fairly, and I care not if for the nonce I indulge thee in thy humour. But I advertise thee thou shalt shoot short of the mark—the bolt wilt not mount the higher for being tipped with gold."

"So be it, my lord, I shall be content with either issue; and now I shall make a fair engrossment of the obligation and condition, which your excellency will please to sign."

In a few minutes the writing of the instrument was completed, and Molo, touching a silver bell, summoned his grandson, a sober-looking, clerkly youth, to witness its execution. Writing was not a very knightly accomplishment in those days, nevertheless, the Count Polani contrived to append his signature to the document in bold straggling characters. This formality having been duly witnessed by the youth, who flourished his name in a corner of the bond, the banker deposited it carefully in the *escritoire*; then he opened a strong oak chest, bound with iron straps, and secured by three locks, and as he drew forth several large canvass bags, said with a quiet smile,—

"Does your lordship desire the whole amount in specie?"

"Diavolo, no!" said the count, "wealth would be too burdensome on such conditions. I will have a hundred ducats, or so, in gold, for present use, the rest will I take in bills, which thou wilt honour as occasion may require."

The matter was speedily arranged to the satisfaction of the count, and as he stowed away the gold loosely in his pouch, and the bills somewhat more carefully in the breast of his doublet, the banker opened a buffet which stood in a corner of the apartment, and took from it a silver salver, on which stood a bottle of vermilion-coloured glass, encased in flagree-work of silver, and on each side of which was a small golden goblet, chased with the most exquisite and elaborate workmanship. Into each of these Pietro Molo poured a little of the contents of the bottle, and courteously extending the salver to his guest, he said,—

"Will it please your excellency to taste, ere you depart, such Maraschino as you will not meet at the works of Palestrina. I brought it myself from Zara, and know the Marasca cherry from which it was made."

The count took the cup, and emptied the contents with a gusto that showed the commendation was not unmerited.

"In faith, it hath the true flavour of the nut, good friend Molo. But I must away now, for the night wears apace, and morning must find me again at my post. I would not that men should know of my visit to thee."

"You have but short time for such travel, my lord, so I shall not offer to detain you. May I make bold to reckon so far upon your condescension, as to beseech you to accept, in memorial of our compact, the goblet in your lordship's hand. It will cumber you but little; nevertheless, though it be small, you will not, I think find its fellow, save this here, in Italy. They are a gift from my good friend Bartoluccio Ghiberti, the goldsmith of Florence, and are the workmanship of his young son, Lorenzo, whose fame is already spreading through the neighbouring states, and they say even as far as Rome."

"You have made your own terms throughout, my worthy Molo," said Polani, "and it would not be fitting to gainsay you in such a matter as this. I shall willingly keep it in memory of thee, when all thy other golden memorials shall have slipt through my fingers."

So saying, the count briefly admired a gem, whose worth he did not half understand, the work of one of the finest geniuses and the most famous worker in metals of his own or any other age,—he, of whose bronze gates, in after years, Michael Angelo declared that they were worthy to be the gates of Paradise.

"O, come bello!" said the count, as words of course, while he drew his black cloak close round his figure and resumed his mask. "And now, Signor Molo, I wish you a good night."

"Buon viaggio, Eccellenza," said the banker, as he ceremoniously attended the count, lamp in hand, to the outer door. In a few minutes the latter was again in his gondola. Now, however, he drew the dark curtains close round, and Beppo at a signal moved noiselessly away as before. He retraced his way as far as the point where the "Dogana del Mare" now stands, and thence through the Canale di Santo Spirito. Here, at its junction with the Canale di Malamocco, at a motion from the count, the gondola glided silently up to a galley lying in the middle of the water; at a signal the rowers stood to their oars, and the count springing on board, in a moment every oar-blade was dipped in the water, and the vessel started on its course with the utmost speed at which stout hands could force it through the water. Next morning, when Count Andrea Polani joined his companions in arms, none knew the journey he had made since they parted on the preceding evening, or had any notion of the strange mode in which he had procured the golden ducats, which he now displayed with a careless ostentation.

## FADED AND GONE.

FADED and gone are the Summer's sweet flowers,  
Strewn by the wintry winds o'er the dark mould!  
Smilers, when sunlight stole through the soft hours,  
Down from yon azure their leaves to unfold.  
Bright were their beauties when breezes swept on  
O'er the blue waters to gather perfume;  
Whisperers lovely, now faded and gone!  
Slumberers lonely 'mid chillness and gloom!  
Oh! but the Spring-time will come o'er the plain  
Wooing the whispering blossoms again,  
With its soft tread o'er the emerald lawn—  
Then we'll not mourn for the faded and gone!

Faded and gone are the ones that we cherished,  
Fondly and true, in our bosoms of yore!  
Slumbering buds may awake o'er the perished,  
Their faded hearts hath unfolded here no more  
Sweet is the music that Memory flings  
O'er the oasis of Life's early love,  
Where flew the Angel on fluttering wings,  
Bearing our lost through the starlight above;  
Oh! there's a land where the perished ones bloom,  
Where cometh never a shadow of gloom!  
Fadeless and fair is that glorious dawn—  
Then we'll not mourn for the faded and gone!

Faded and gone are the sweet dreams of childhood,  
When the young wings of the Spirit were free,  
Folded or furled 'mid the shadowy wildwood—  
Sweeping the surface of life's sunny sea.  
Time's fading finger hath sullied the leaf,  
Stainless and lovely in childhood's pure years;  
Pages of beauty once brilliant, yet brief,  
Wear its deep impress of changes and tears!  
Oh! but the blossoms of childhood will bloom  
Brightly again, o'er the shadowy Tomb  
Infinite gladness flow endlessly on—  
Then we'll not murmur for the faded and gone!